

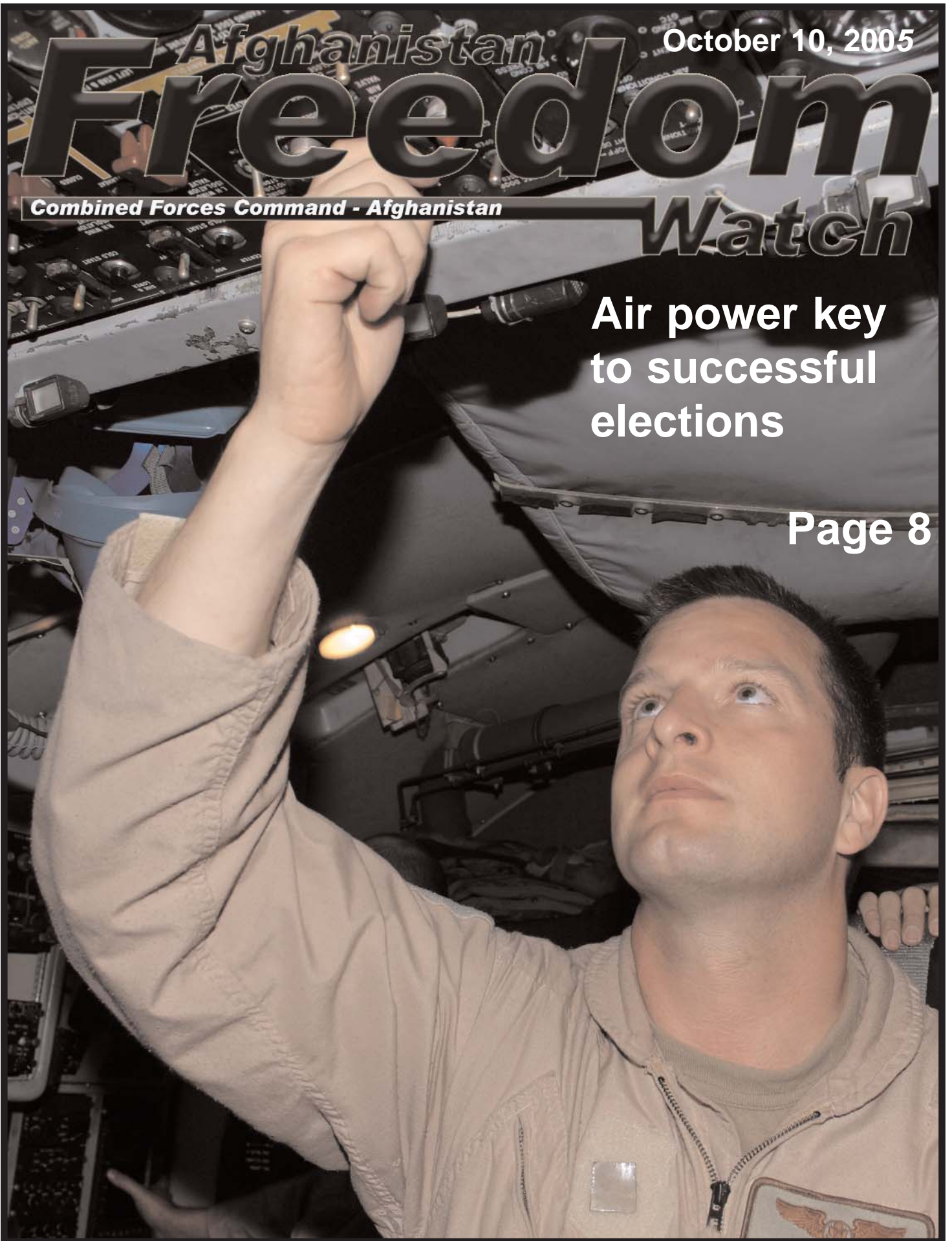
October 10, 2005

Afghanistan Freedom Watch

Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan

**Air power key
to successful
elections**

Page 8





Army Lt. Col. Timothy McGuire from 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment speaks with Afghans during a visit in Seghana Sept. 18. The visit was conducted as a part of security patrol on the day of parliamentary elections in Afghanistan.

Photo by Army Pfc. Michael Zuk
55th Signal Company

Page 3: Signal Soldiers maintain connection

Page 4: Afghan Army garrison opens in Herat

Page 5: Afghans enjoy successful elections

Page 6: Afghan Army combats illiteracy

Page 7: Maintenance keeps wrenches turning

Page 8: Air power key to successful elections ►

Cover: Air Force Master Sgt. Steve Wolbert, an EC-130 flight engineer, conducts preflight checks before take-off on the eve of Afghanistan's National Assembly elections.

Photo by Air Force Capt. James H. Cunningham



Page 11: Father and son share deployment

Page 12: Firefighters volunteer at FOB

Page 14: Around the services

Page 15: 'Bomb training' ►



Afghanistan **Freedom** Watch

Freedom Watch is the weekly publication of Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan.

CFC-A Commander - Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry
Public Affairs Officer - Col. James R. Yonts

Freedom Watch, an Army publication, is published each Monday by the 20th Public Affairs Detachment at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Printed circulation is 6,000 copies per week.

In accordance with AR-360-1, this Army newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military overseas.

Contents of the *Freedom Watch* are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army.

Deadline for submissions is 0730 Zulu each Friday. All submissions are subject to editing by the 20th Public Affairs Detachment, located in Bldg. 425, Room 107, Bagram Airfield. We can be reached at DSN 318-231-3338.

Freedom Watch Staff

Commander - Maj. T.G. Taylor
NCOIC - Sgt. Matthew MacRoberts
Editor - Sgt. James-Denton Wyllie
Journalists - Staff Sgt. Ken Denny
Sgt. Douglas DeMaio, Spc. Jason Krawczyk
Spc. Tiffany Evans, Pfc. Vincent Fusco

Visit the CFC-A Web site at
www.cfc-a.centcom.mil

Click on the *Freedom Watch* link in the features section to view the *Freedom Watch*. To be added to the weekly distribution list, e-mail freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil

Signal Soldiers maintain connection

By Army Pfc. Vincent Fusco
20th Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Signal Soldiers are people persons.

Through telephone and computer networking, the Soldiers of the 807th and 580th Signal companies are keeping the people of Kandahar Airfield connected.

Army Sgt. 1st Class Efrain Acevedo, a native San Juan, Puerto Rico, and his fellow Soldiers of the Army Reserve's 807th Sig. Co. are working to provide secure and unsecure Internet, and telephone access for Coalition forces.

"(Efrain's) in charge of running that cabling, and I'm in charge of making it hot," said Army Sgt. 1st Class Gilbert Acevedo, a Wilmington, Del., native with 24 years active and reserve time in the Army.

Gilbert is the noncommissioned officer in charge of the direct signal support team from the 580th Sig. Co., 25th Signal Battalion, Qatar, the only permanent party unit stationed in theater.

During their deployment here, the Acevedos discovered they are second cousins, their fathers native to Arecibo, Puerto Rico.

The airfield has approximately 3,100 network users and 500 phones in use.

Gilbert and his team of 32 civilian contractors are responsible for activating and maintaining the systems provided by Efrain and his 60 Soldiers based here and in Kabul, Bagram and Karshi-Kahanabad, Uzbekistan.

"The Soldiers are truly professionals," said Efrain, who has 19 years active and reserve time in the Army. "This is their job in civilian life."

The present focus for both units is the installation of the communication protocol for multi-national forces working with the Coalition and the International Security Assistance Force.

The program is at forefront of communication efforts needed to be completed before ISAF occupies the area, said Gilbert.

Efrain's Soldiers also provided network support for fire bases in the cities of Qalat and Tarin Kowt.

"They jump in a chopper, stay for three or four weeks, finish the job and come back," said Efrain.

Gilbert and his team authorize communications usage based on operational capacity. He stressed that his work "is a business, plain and simple," and he, Efrain and their Soldiers work any means necessary to meet the needs of the entire operation.

The results of the combined efforts

over the last year with 10 miles of fiber-optic and copper cable strung over more than 200 poles and better, faster service with a new technical control facility.

"Since January, I've seen so many changes in this place," said Gilbert.

"(Former 25th Sig. Bn.) Command Sgt. Maj. (Donald G.) Manly said he's seen more progress in six months than in the past year he's been here."

While both companies provided the phone system for the morale, welfare and recreation center and wired up 25 computers at the education center, strategic communications support remains their primary mission.

"The next big project is to support (Kellogg, Brown and Root)," said Gilbert. "We need to get phones out there."

To establish communications to the contracting facility, a proposed pole line is being favored over buried cable, which can be accidentally dug up and destroyed.

"We don't bury cable anymore," said Gilbert. "It gets too fragile."

In a Reserve unit made up of about 70 percent Puerto Ricans and 30 percent cross-level Soldiers from the United States, Efrain takes note of his Soldiers' "real bond, like brothers and sisters."

"It doesn't matter who we are, the Soldiers team up so well," said Efrain. "It's one team, one fight, like they say."



PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

Army Sgt. Garth Miller, from 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment, mans a squad automatic weapon during a patrol in Seghana Sept. 17. The patrol was part of security for parliamentary elections in Afghanistan.

Photo by Army Pfc. Michael Zuk
55th Signal Company

If you have high-quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.

Afghan Army garrison opens in Herat

By Army Sgt. Mason T. Lowery
Office of Security Cooperation-
Afghanistan Public Affairs

HERAT, Afghanistan - Afghan Minister of Defense Abdul Rahim Wardak cut the ribbon of the new Afghan National Army garrison in Herat recently, opening its doors for use by the ANA's 207th Corps.

"Though this is the third ANA garrison to open, today is especially significant because this is the first garrison outside of Kabul to be opened," said Air Force Maj. Gen. John Brennan, chief of the Office of Security Cooperation-Afghanistan, during the opening ceremony. "This event is even more significant because of the 11 garrisons (being) built outside of Kabul this garrison was the last to be started. But today we celebrate it as the first permanent corps headquarters to open."

Wardak spoke to the assembled ANA soldiers about their role in Afghanistan's unity and how they are a truly national army, representing all of their country's ethnic tribes.

"You might be from different provinces speaking different languages, but you're one nation and you represent one Afghanistan," he said. "You all have one

goal and objective, which is strengthening of the national unity.

"When you are trapped in a mine field, none of your family members or your relatives will be there to help you. The one who will help you is your (Tajik, Pashtun, Uzbek, Turkman or Hazara) friend. Friends in battle are closer than real brothers."

The garrison cost \$66.8 million to build, employed approximately 1,000 Afghan construction workers and took 13 months from contract to ribbon cutting. The garrison was constructed by Afghans working for Contrak International, a civilian construction contractor under the management and supervision of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It will be home to the headquarters of the ANA's 207th Zafar (Victory) Corps and its 1st Brigade. Also located on the compound, will be the garrison headquarters and five kandaks (battalions) from the 1st Brigade.

The construction of ANA garrisons provides power projection platforms that allow ANA soldiers from Afghanistan's five regions to defend their entire country, said Army Col. Christopher J. Toomey, commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Afghanistan.

"I think the garrisons are a great step in

the right direction. An army needs a power projection platform," he said. "This is also a recruiting tool - these garrisons have better living conditions than many Afghans have at home. It's bringing them up in life."

Afghans don't travel to different parts of their country as much as people from nations with better infrastructures do in their countries. Building the garrison in Herat localizes the ANA for Herat residents, Toomey explained.

"It also infused the local economy with money. We employed locals -- it's good for the community," he said.

The Afghan workers got more than jobs while they worked on the garrison.

"They learned trades while working in Herat. Jobs with our contractors are higher paying and more secure (than many other jobs in Afghanistan)," Toomey said. The Afghan construction workers' jobs didn't end with the ribbon cutting. During construction, they were also trained to maintain the facility.

Building the garrison consisted of mine clearing, topographic surveys, demolition and grading, building a waste water treatment facility and sanitary sewer collection

See Garrison, next page
From Garrison, previous page

Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week



Afghan cultural tidbit

Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week:

Have a blessed Ramadan.

Dari

Ramazan khosh Baria shoma Mikho-hm.

(Ram-azan- khua-sh Baria-sho-ma Mikho-hm)

Pashtu

Kha Rozha Tazota Ghohram

(K-ha Roz-ha taz-ota Gho-hram)

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. Islam uses a lunar calendar -- that is, each month begins with the sighting of the new moon. Because the lunar calendar is about 11 days shorter than the solar calendar used elsewhere, Islamic holidays "move" each year. Ramadan began on Oct. 5.

(<http://www.afghan-network.net/Culture/attractions.html>)

Afghans enjoy successful elections

By Army Sgt. Tara Teel
Combined Joint Task Force-76
Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - The people of Afghanistan woke up to a brighter future Sept. 19 after successfully voting for their new leadership.

Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police and international military forces ensured that more than 12.5 million registered voters had the opportunity to participate in the National Assembly Elections in a safe and secure environment.

ANP patrolman Jahwedolah hailed election day as historical. "It will be good for our future, and we will have a good future."

"For three decades everything has come apart and been destroyed by war," said voter Asem. "No one had the freedom to vote for the president or the national assembly."

Asem assessed election day as "a very important day."

Another voter, Mazi Rashidi, said, "We (voted) for candidates to the National Assembly, and when we have problems in

the village or the district, these elected representatives will take those problems to the government."

"The election results will not be known for several weeks," said Maj. Gen. Jason Kamiya, Combined Joint Task Force-76 commander.

"However, we believe the real winners in this process are the people of Afghanistan who courageously took a stand against years of violence and oppression, and took a major step forward toward peace and prosperity."

"Let there be no doubt that the success of the National Assembly Provincial Council Election has strengthened the resolve and commitment of U.S. and Coalition Forces," the general said.

"We will relentlessly continue security operations, in partnership with Afghan National Security Forces, to keep the enemy on the defensive and to continue to bring security, reconstruction, and development to the Afghan people on behalf of their central government."

There are more than 50,000 members of the Afghanistan National Army and more than 25,000 Afghanistan National Police

in uniform providing security to its people and participating in operations designed to quell any resurgence of Taliban or other terrorist organizations.

Since Afghanistan's last successful election, when the Afghan majority democratically elected President Hamad Karzai into office, the strength of the government has increased.

The future of Afghanistan will depend on the ability of the legitimately elected provincial representatives to meet the needs of their people.

system, as well as the design and construction of new buildings.

The new buildings include a main dining facility; corps, brigade and garrison headquarters complexes; five kandak complexes; parking areas and maintenance facilities.

With the completion of the Herat garrison, the engineers, construction companies and Afghan workers will next focus their efforts on completing brigade garrison complexes for the ANA's 209th and 203rd Corps in Mazar-e-Sharif and Gardez.

Enduring Voices

If you could ask the president one question, what would you ask?



Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Sarah Armstrong
Lashkar Gah Provincial Reconstruction Team

"How was it to ride bikes with Lance Armstrong?"



Army Sgt. Cedrick Hawthorne, Headquarters, Headquarters Company
12th Aviation Brigade.

"When will you be visiting us over here?"



Army 1st Lt. John Hubbard, Alabama National Guard

"What is the long-term plan for all this?"



Marine Lance Cpl. Trevor Bailey, Joint Visitor Bureau

"When do I get to go home?"

Afghan Army combats illiteracy

By Air Force 1st Lt.

Leslie Brown

Office of Security Cooperation - Afghanistan Public Affairs

KABUL, Afghanistan - According to the U.S. Agency for International Development, the nation of Afghanistan has one of the highest illiteracy rates in the world with a national average of 70 percent.

Since the Afghan National Army is a truly national force, with soldiers recruited from all areas throughout Afghanistan, its soldiers also fall into this percentage.

To address this important issue, the ANA officially began preparation for soldier literacy training by hosting a Literacy Workshop at the Ministry of Defense.

"Literacy training for the ANA is vital to long-term success in sustaining a quality force since it is imperative for command, control and communications," said Army Lt. Col. Janet Kai, deputy personnel officer at the Human Resources Directorate of the Office of Security Cooperation-Afghanistan.

Currently the ANA has nearly 16,000 illiterate soldiers. As new recruits come into the service that number increases, so the need for literacy training is urgent, Kai said.

More than two decades of war have robbed many Afghans of education -- one of the main reasons for the high percentage of illiteracy, said Romanian Army Lt. Col. Mircea Romocia, ministry engagement team chief for Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan.

"During the war they couldn't go to school because the children and young adults normally had to work to help support their families," Romocia said.

The ANA recently established a Literacy Working Group and Literacy Commission. Headed by members of the Afghan Army's General Staff, both of these organizations worked closely with the Afghan Ministry of Education to develop a comprehensive literacy strategy. They focused on developing policies and procedures and implementing methods to create long-term, sustainable results.

The staff leaders worked together with other Afghan government ministries, non-government organizations and Coalition members to develop objectives for the literacy training plan.

To get the literacy plan started, the commission hosted the literacy workshop to bring all the people involved in the program together.

During the two-day workshop, Afghan government officials spoke of the necessity of the new program.

"Literacy is important for three reasons," said Afghan Col. Aminullah Rahin, the Afghan Ministry of Education's deputy of political and religious affairs. "It allows people to gain information about society and their role within that society, it enables them to make changes in society, and finally, it allows for the development of skills within that society."

"National Literacy Day, Sept. 8, is an appropriate time to start this program," Kai said. "The workshop is just one step in the



Photo by Army Sgt. Lynnette M. Jefferson, Office of Security Cooperation-Afghanistan

Afghan and Coalition members gather for the two-day Literacy Workshop held at the Afghan Defense Ministry.

process of making the ANA a confident, literate force."

The instructors who will be part of the literacy program were introduced at the event. The Education Development Center, part of the Afghan Ministry of Education, screened and selected the 105 teachers who will attend a master training course before beginning their new jobs.

The main objective of the literacy initiative is to have a standardized program. Lasting four to six months depending on skill level, the program will teach illiterate soldiers to read and write to at least a third-grade level. Another goal is to have the first 4,000 soldiers begin the program by December 2005.

The program coordinators also plan to have a functional ANA literacy textbook ready by the end of the year, with a system in place to test each soldier's literacy level before, during and after completion of the program.

"Education is one of the most critical of investments," Kai said. She hopes the soldiers will also be empowered with basic skills that improve their quality of life.

During the workshop, Dr. Homa Nooristani, the Ministry of Education's chief of the Adult Literacy Vital Statistics Department, discussed the importance of cooperation between the Afghan ministries for the program to be a success.

"The Ministry of Education promises to work closely with the Ministry of Defense to make this program useful in boosting the capability of the ANA," Nooristani said.

Nooristani understands the plight of her country.

"During the decades of war in Afghanistan many of the experienced teachers migrated to different countries," she said. "With them went the knowledge and training." With this literacy program, she said, "we are providing experienced teachers."

The Defense Ministry plans to deploy these teachers to military installations throughout Afghanistan to teach the ANA soldiers.

Soldier literacy is vital to the success of the ANA as it continues to grow in size and capability.

"Literacy is very important," Nooristani said. "In fact, it is the key to knowledge."

Maintenance keeps wrenches turning

By Army Pfc. Vincent Fusco
20th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE PACEMAKER, Afghanistan - The 5th Maintenance Company, based in Kaiserslauten, Germany, has been turning wrenches so Task Force Pacemaker can move mountains.

The unit has assisted the task force with direct level support from a detachment based at Forward Operating Base Pacemaker.

"All of these guys have a direct impact on the road projects," said Army Chief Warrant Officer Bryan Hanks, officer in charge of the engineer and automotive sections.

"If it's something that works on the road, we work on it," said Army Staff Sgt. Louis Lopez Jr., engineer section noncommissioned officer in charge. "We help these guys troubleshoot a lot and do repairs."

Bulldozers and graders are brought in for troubleshooting, said Lopez.

Sometimes wiring and cylinders are repaired, and sometimes engines, hydraulic cylinders, and transmissions are replaced.

The detachment started working with Pacemaker at Forward Operating Base Ripley, and moved with them at the pace of the road mission.

"(Task Force Pacemaker) had a big push for us to get here. They had a lot of equipment that was damaged," said Army Staff Sgt. Sherman Butler, the machinist section chief with the detachment. "We had to catch up so they can do their jobs."

The detachment repaired 50 pieces of equipment in a 10-day period, and completed 575 jobs in the last three months between working at forward operating bases Ripley and Pacemaker.

The detachment handles every problem the task force's own unit support level cannot fix. To do this, work orders need to be submitted through proper channels.

"Normally, the unit uses a computer system designed to process work orders, but those systems aren't here," said Army

Sgt. 1st Class Wade Manly, NCOIC of the communications and electronics section. "It takes about two or three days to process a work order."

Many work orders need to be sent through Kandahar Airfield to be processed, but Manly wrote a program called BLUETrakker, a Microsoft Access database that streamlines operations at Pacemaker and tracks all the unit's job orders and their status.

"(BLUETrakker) saves us about an hour on calculations alone," said Manly.

Another problem the detachment has encountered is the limited or lack of access to replacement parts and supplies.

"It's been a logistical nightmare," said Hanks. "We don't have a (post exchange) out here or anything."

In the past, the detachment has relied on aircraft, convoys, PX runs and even family members to receive the parts they needed.

To minimize the need for requesting parts, the detachment has a machinist facility that removes and repairs broken nuts and bolts, reducing turnaround time and saving money.

Additionally, nuts, bolts and special tools are remanufactured for the engineering and automotive sections, as well as armament, which specializes in repairing small firearms, said Butler.

"A lot of problems come from loose nuts and bolts," said Lopez.

"A vehicle that would be dead-lined for a week or more because of a couple of broken bolts could be back on site the next day," he said.

"The engineers also have the capability to repair air conditioners, and water distribution and purification equipment," said Hanks.

"The automotive section also fixes HMMWV, 20-ton transporters, anything with wheels," he said.

The detachment also performs recovery missions when a vehicle breaks down on site and must be fixed on deadline.

"Once a vehicle breaks down on the road, they call back to us, said Army Sgt. 1st Class Rodrick Calunan, company first sergeant and automotive section NCOIC.

"We send out a two-vehicle recovery team."

The team consists of one Humvee and a wrecker, with one officer in charge and three Soldiers. Recovery missions usually do not last more than a couple hours, and the team responds to anything from inoperable Humvees to overturned bulldozers.

"Once we turn [a dozer] over, we have to figure out how to bring it back," said Calunan. "We tow it or put it on a trailer."

The maintenance company performs on-site assistance with welding trailers, which can be deployed with a team to the road to weld culverts or fix damaged equipment.

"We've done a lot of welding out here," said Butler. "(The rocky terrain) puts a lot of wear on the trailers that carry equipment out to the job site."

The communications and electronics section fixes tactical radio systems that are "lifelines between vehicles on convoys," said Manly.

"We fix computers, telephones, and land lines," said Manly. "We also do a lot of morale repair. I feel that's an important part of what we do."

When a Soldier brings in a gaming system or DVD player, the technicians will open it up, troubleshoot and try to fix it, said Manly. About 90 percent of the time, the problem is fixed, and the Soldier's morale is kept up.

During their mission here, the detachment has been recording systemic problems and sending them through the Department of the Army to adjust current policies and procedures, said Hanks.

With Task Force Pacemaker's mission here nearly complete, the unit may go to Kandahar Airfield and stay with Pacemaker, or move to Sharana to assist with the next road project.

"We're a robust team, but not big enough to split up," said Hanks. "We all work hand-in-hand, and have good Soldiers working for us."

"It's a lot of heavy duty work, a lot of dirty work, but somebody's got to do it," said Lopez.



Crew members ready an Air Force EC-130 aircraft for flight from Bagram Airfield in preparation for an electronic protection mission for the elections. Aircraft blanketed the country for the duration of the elections to provide safe and secure conditions voting conditions.

Photo by Air Force Capt. James H. Cunningham, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing



Air power key deterrent to success of landmark Afghan elections

By Staff Sgt. Marcus McDonald
455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - The major focus of air-power during Afghanistan's Sept. 18 National Assembly elections was deterring and disrupting attacks on the ground from the skies.

Air Force A-10s and EC-130s and Navy EA-6Bs blanketed the country for the duration of the elections to provide safe and secure conditions as the elections brought Afghanistan one step closer to democracy.

Air Force Lt. Col. Dave Evans, Operation Enduring Freedom Air Component Coordination Element plans officer, said airpower was a major factor to the success of the elections and follow-on political process.

"We'll maintain a sizeable airpower presence throughout the country to ensure the voting and ballot counting processes go as smoothly as possible," said Evans.

A-10s from Pope Air Force Base, N.C., and Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., provided close air support to ground troops and shows of presence for Afghan voters.

Air Force Lt. Col. Jeff Cowan, commander of the 74th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron here, said his Flying Tigers did what it took to support ground operations.

"We increased our capabilities to fully support this historic event," said Cowan, a native of Pittsburgh, Penn. "We've strategically positioned ourselves throughout Afghanistan to ensure the success of this election process."

EC-130Hs from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., and EA-6Bs from Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, Wash., provided electronic protection for friendly forces as well as those participating in the elections.

Air Force Lt. Col. Chuck Schnarr, commander of the 41st

"Without air power, I believe the elections wouldn't be as successful"

Air Force
Senior Airman
Earl-Ray Haag

See Air power, page 10



Photo by Air Force Capt. James H. Cunningham, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing

Air Force 1st Lt. Jeremy Smith, an EC-130 mission crew commander, conducts preflight checks before takeoff on the eve of Afghanistan's National Assembly elections. Air Force A-10s and EC-130s as well as Navy EA-6Bs stepped up efforts throughout Afghanistan as a way to deter enemy aggression and help ensure voter safety during the national elections. Smith, a native of Fairborn, Ohio, is deployed here from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz.

From Air power, page 9

Expeditionary Electronic Combat Squadron here, said the EC-130H crews and support personnel -- who've been deployed here for more than 540 days -- are making an impact on the future of Afghanistan.

"It's fascinating that the Afghan people have been, and continue to be, excited about voting despite the dangers involved," Schnarr said. "Our mission is to alleviate some of those concerns and ensure success in these historic elections and beyond."

Navy Cmdr. Jay Johnston, the commander of Electronic Attack Squadron 134 out of Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, WA, said "This is the Garudas' (EAS 134th's) second deployment to Afghanistan, and (we) are leveraging this experience to optimize operations in support of the elections and Operation Enduring Freedom."

"We're in the skies providing an umbrella of protection by providing

electronic-jamming support to ground troops and voters. I'm pretty proud of how well our aircrew and Sailors have performed during these intense operations" said Johnston.

An aircrew member and a crew chief gave their thoughts on their contributions to bringing democracy to Afghanistan by supporting the country's election process from above.

"I feel very privileged to be a part of this moment in history," said Air Force 1st Lt. Jeremy Smith, EC-130 mission crew commander for the 41st EECS, a native of Fairborn, Ohio.

"As a squadron, we're certainly proud to support our forces on the ground as well as the voters in this election process."

"Without airpower, I believe the elections wouldn't be as successful," said Air Force Senior Airman Earl-Ray Haag, A-10 crew chief from Pope Air Force Base, N.C., and a native of Los Lunas, N.M.

"The presence of A-10s and other aircraft in the region are helping keep the terrorists away."

The commander of the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing, as well as director of the Air Component Coordination Element here expressed how proud he was of everyone executing the mission as a team to clear the path for a successful Afghan election.

"Airpower is and will continue to play a vital role in the election process," said Air Force Brig. Gen. Bruce Burda. "Our A-10, EC-130 and EA-6B crews, along with many Coalition partners, are doing a fantastic job supporting the Afghan and Coalition ground forces who are working so hard to ensure the elections are completed in an open and credible manner."

"This is a team effort and I can't say enough about the job our folks are doing," the general said. "They are truly helping to make history here in Afghanistan and the region."



Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 Ronald W. Peeler and his son, Army Sgt. Ronald G. Peeler, take time to talk at Camp Eggers. Father and son are deployed here together from the 228th Signal Brigade in Spartanburg, S.C.

Father, son share deployment

**By Air Force Senior Airman Matthew Dillier
Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan Public Affairs**

CAMP EGGERS, KABUL, Afghanistan - The bond between most fathers and sons is as strong as forged steel.

Whether fishing by a stream or watching their favorite football team on a Sunday afternoon, little can disrupt that lifelong relationship -- except deployments to foreign lands.

Not so for Army Sgt. Ronald G. Peeler and his dad Army Chief Warrant Officer Ronald W. Peeler. They deployed here together from the 228th Signal Brigade in Spartanburg, S.C.

For both Peelers, this is their first deployment.

"For me it has been a good experience," said Chief Peeler,

CFC-A Combined Joint 6 Information Systems technician. "I'd rather be deployed together so I know where he is. My wife felt better about it because I was going with him."

His son agreed.

"You have a better sense of security when you're with people you know," Sergeant Peeler said. "It's not as bad as being dropped in the middle of nowhere."

Having his son nearby after nearly a year in Afghanistan and support from home has made this deployment pass relatively quickly for Chief Peeler.

"My wife is definitely a big support," he said. "I do know that she'd like us home soon."

At home or abroad, senior Peeler has always been the chief to his son.

"I don't think we're any different here than we are at

home," Sergeant Peeler said. "I also have a better opportunity to just learn from him while we still have time together. I spend more time with him over here than I normally do back in the real world. It's a win-win situation."

His father agreed.

"He's a good kid," the elder Peeler said. "I'm proud to have a son like him."

Chief Peeler joined the South Carolina National Guard in 1970 where he serves in the 228th Signal Brigade in Spartanburg, S.C., along with his son.

"Vietnam was hot right about the time I joined. I was just out of school and I just wanted to be in the Guard," said Chief Peeler.

Chief Peeler, a former sergeant first class who has been a chief warrant officer since August 2002, was motivated

to become a warrant officer because he highly regarded their position they held.

"I admired the respect a warrant [officer] carried and respected the talent they displayed," he said. "I felt I could become one and continue that image."

With a role model like that, Sergeant Peeler was motivated to carry on his father's military legacy. He joined the Air Force in 1994.

"Seeing my dad had a little bit to do with me joining. I first joined the Air Force as a missile maintenance technician," Sergeant Peeler said.

"However my interests grew to computers after being in the Air Force, and I felt that active duty wasn't for me anymore."

After finishing his tour with the Air Force, he joined the Army National Guard with his dad's unit.



Photo by Army Spc. Tiffany Evans

Air Force Airman 1st Class John Black, 367th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, lightly places a towel on Nawab Arahaman's leg to dry off the water used to clean the burns he suffered.

Firefighters volunteer at FOB

By Army Spc. Tiffany Evans
20th Public Affairs Detachment

FOB SALERNO, Afghanistan - Four Air Force firefighters with the 367th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron volunteer three to four days a week in the emergency room at Forward Operating Base Salerno.

"We do this so that the hospital has an extra set of hands and to help maintain our emergency medical technician proficiency," said Air Force Tech. Sgt. Dion Bullock.

"Our volunteer days usually coincide with the days that the hospital treats Afghans."

It's great to help other service members, but helping to treat the Afghans is a great way to gain their trust and support, said Bullock.

"I feel that our hours spent in the ER are vital to our mission as a whole here," said Air Force Airman 1st Class William Kretsch. "By healing the Afghans here, we're forming bonds that we can continue to strengthen."

In addition, word of mouth is how the majority of news

spreads in this country, said Kretsch. For every Afghan we treat they go home and tell everyone how the Coalition helped them.

"This helps to spread around all the good things that we are doing for the Afghans," said Bullock. "With every patient I treat I can see the positive impact we're making."

When patients come back for check-ups they're more talkative and engaging, said Bullock.

"My people are still reeling from the Taliban's rule and the Coalition is doing everything they can to help us," said Nasrullah, a patient being treated at the hospital.

The people here are scared of the terrorists, said Nasrullah. They will cooperate and do everything they can to help the Coalition capture those who seek to destroy the good that has been accomplished.

"We are glad the Coalition is here. They are our honored guest," said Nasrullah. "They have helped to save our people and continue to help serve our country daily."



Photos by Army Spc. Tiffany Evans

Air Force Tech. Sgt. Dion Bullock, Air Combat Command ACC, 55th Wing, 376th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, helps to remove burnt skin from the arm of Nawab Arahman.



Air Force Tech. Sgt. Dion Bullock of the 376th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, draws blood from the arm of a 55-year old man named Nasrullah.



Photo courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

(Left to right) Air Force Staff Sgt. Josie E. Harshe, flight engineer; Air Force Capt. Anita T. Mack, navigator; Air Force 1st Lt. Siobhan Couturier, pilot; Air Force Capt. Carol J. Mitchell, aircraft commander; and loadmasters Air Force Tech. Sgt. Sigrid M. Carrero-Perez and Air Force Senior Airman Ci Ci Alonzo, in the cargo bay of a C-130.

All-female combat crew takes it in stride

By Air Force Capt. Michael G. Johnson
386th Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs

SOUTHWEST ASIA - A crew of six Air Force Airmen at a forward deployed location climbed aboard a C-130 Hercules recently. But something distinguished this mission from others they had flown -- it was the first time an all-female C-130 crew flew a combat mission.

Capt. Carol Mitchell, aircraft commander; 1st Lt. Siobhan Couturier, pilot; Capt. Anita T. Mack, navigator; Staff Sgt. Josie E. Harshe, flight engineer; and loadmasters Tech. Sgt. Sigrid M. Carrero-Perez and Senior Airman Ci Ci Alonzo are all permanently assigned to the 43rd Airlift Wing at Pope Air Force Base, N.C., and currently are deployed to the 737th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron flying cargo and troops in and out of Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa.

While some would call their mission "historic," they feel

this mission should be recognized like every other flight -- a successful combat mission.

"I enjoyed flying with this crew, but I don't think we should go out of our way to have all-female crews," said Mitchell. "It took a long time for women to become accepted as aircrew members, and, now that we are, we would be taking a step back by singling ourselves out rather than blending in with the rest of the Air Force."

Alonzo agrees. "It was a great experience not many females can say they've had," she said. "However I don't believe the Air Force should seek out all-female crews. Instead, we should focus on experience."

"(The Air Force) should have the best crews they can put together. Nothing other than qualification and ability should be considered," said Mack.

Not only did this all female crew fly together for the first time, 6,800 miles from home-station, but they flew the mission on a Vietnam-era airplane -- a significance the crew did

not miss.

"Our (aircraft) was a 1962 model. (It) came off the line when women weren't accepted as C-130 aircrew, let alone in combat," said Harshe.

After the excitement of this all-female C-130 crew flying the first combat mission together wore off, they focused on what really mattered.

"(What matters is) knowing we're making a difference and seeing it with every mission we fly," said Alonzo. "(It's also) moving troops into the theater where they're needed, seeing the excitement and relief on the faces of the guys and gals we take out of theater who have been there for six months to a year and are on their way home to their loved ones."

During the mission, the crew transported 151 Marines and their equipment.

Another thing they all agreed upon was that the mission was a true experience.

"It was a fun thing to be able to say you did, if only once. Not that it is better, this was just different, and probably

won't happen for us again anytime soon just because of the sheer numbers," said Harshe.

Mitchell said one additional benefit of this all female flight was gaining a different perspective.

"One way to avoid (complacency) is to mix the crews up a little, fly with some different people to get a different perspective," she said. "And what better way to mix the crews up than by putting all the girls on the same crew?"

While the all-female crew did accomplish a unique milestone together, they point out that the significance of their mission success is that every crewmember achieved personal goals to get there.

"I encourage any girl or woman to do what she wants. Too often, I hear people say they can't do something (but it is) because they don't realize they have the opportunity," said Mack. "I would tell any person flying is an attainable goal for anyone who wants to work for it. As they say, you are only limited in what you can do by what you can dream."

Bomb training

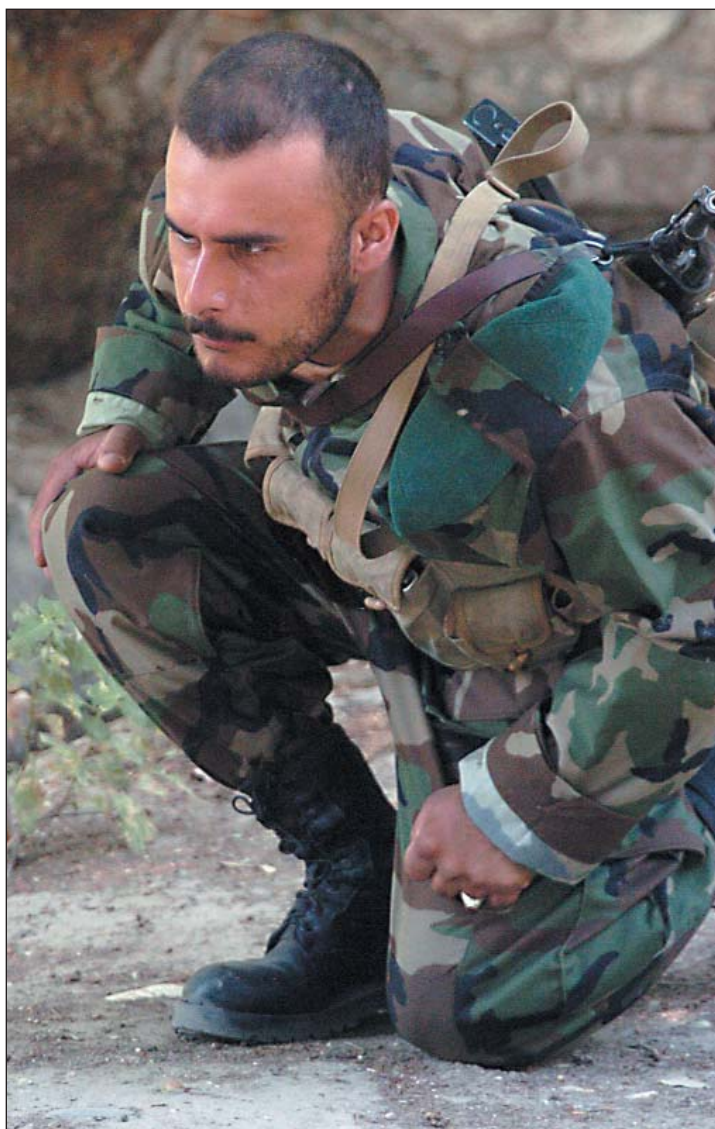
*By Air Force Staff Sgt. Victoria Meyer
Office of Security Cooperation-Afghanistan*

U.S. Army Soldiers from Coalition Joint Task Force Phoenix, train Afghan National Army soldiers to counter the one thing their enemies use most often -- improvised explosive devices.

The instructors went through a comprehensive three-day class at Bagram Airfield with Task Force IED to ensure they had all the knowledge and materials to train the ANA.



Army 1st Lt. Jose Otero, an instructor from Coalition Joint Task Force Phoenix, displays an improvised explosive device to students.



Photos by Air Force Staff Sgt. Victoria Meyer, Office of Security Cooperation-Afghanistan

During the practical exercise portion of the improvised explosive device training class, a student searches for a dummy IED planted by the instructors.



Army Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Menendez (right) and Army Spc. Curt Kinker (left) of Task Force Phoenix teach ANA soldiers in Jalalabad to identify and deal with different types of improvised explosive devices.



Freedom Watch ***October 10, 2005***

“The United States is like a giant boiler. Once the fire is lighted under it, there is no limit to the power it can generate.”

Winston Churchill